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FROM THE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Science and
Education
Administration

Washington, D.C.
20250

August 1978

Dear employee and cooperator:

I'm delighted to be on board and part of SEA.

I've already discovered that SEA is composed of sincere, capable, and hard-working people.

I accepted the position of SEA director because I believe in the concept on which SEA is based...that the most effective food and agricultural programs are those that integrate Research, Extension, and Teaching.

In SEA we have the opportunity to integrate all of our USDA activities...and to make sure these activities complement the work of those of you who are our cooperators in the States.

The land-grant approach has been eminently successful in this country.

Now we have the opportunity to apply the same kind of "three-in-one" approach in USDA food and agricultural research and education programs.

Dr. James Nielson has led SEA through some perilous waters during the reorganization. Thanks to him and the people who worked with him, including cooperators, SEA is now a reality. All parts are functioning. But there's still much to do to make SEA the smooth-running "lead agency" for food and agricultural research and education that it must be. With the help of all of you--employee and cooperator alike--we will succeed.

This is my first letter to you. I will be writing you at least once a month...and more often if the information warrants it.

Now to business:

We presented our 1980 SEA budget request to Secretary Bergland August 10.

The figures can't be released yet because more review is upcoming--in the department and at the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

We hope there won't be much downward revision...but look for a tight budget year in 1980. Those are the indications we are getting from OMB.

By the way, SEA staff support for the presentation was excellent. Dr. James Nielson, Dr. Ernest Corley, and Mr. Ira Branson did a

great job in getting all the materials together. Mr. John Victor and his financial management division made sure we had all the figures and checked and rechecked them to make sure they were correct. And our information staff audio-visual people created some very effective visual aids on very short notice.

Our FY 1979 budget (agricultural appropriations bill HR-13125) has passed both Houses of Congress.

Conference isn't expected until after Labor Day.

As usual, the House and Senate versions differ.

Here are the differences:

In Federal Research (formerly ARS) the House voted a \$9.2 million increase for research and \$35.7 for facilities--the Senate, \$12.9 million for research and \$15 million for facilities.

The Senate provided increases for both inhouse and extramural research--the House, only for inhouse.

The House restored budget cuts proposed by the President, while the Senate kept them.

In Extension the House also restored cuts, increased EFNEP by \$2.5 million, and added \$690 thousand for the 1890 colleges and Tuskegee. It increased solar energy by \$2.5 million.

The Senate retained the cuts, deleted House-sponsored solar energy and EFNEP increases, provided \$3.8 million for increased State salary and retirement costs, and added \$1,079 thousand for the 1890 colleges and Tuskegee.

In Cooperative Research the House again restored cuts...for Hatch, Title V...provided some increases in Special Research Grants under P.L. 89-106, deleted a \$30 million for Competitive Research Grants proposed by the President, increased solar research by \$2.5 million, and added \$2,207 thousand for the 1890 colleges and Tuskegee.

The Senate accepted cuts for Title V and for some Special Research Grant programs, reduced Hatch by only \$4.7 million (instead of over \$11 million proposed in the President's budget), agreed to \$30 million proposed for Competitive Grants, increased animal health and disease research by \$20 million, deleted the House-sponsored increase for solar research and other Special Research Grants, retained Soybean Cyst Nematode research, and added Mushroom By-Product Utilization research.

For Technical Information Systems (National Agricultural Library) both Houses recommended \$7.5 million for FY 1979, a \$650 thousand increase over the 1978 appropriation.

Our competitive grant awards are on schedule, despite the short time for evaluation and selection, thanks to the Herculean efforts of Dr. Joe Key and his competitive grants staff...and 100 peer evaluators across the country.

There were 1109 proposals submitted from March 7, when the guidelines were announced, to April 15, the submission deadline.

The proposals added up to over \$200 million in research! But only \$14.4 million is available for awards...one-third going to human nutrition research and the rest to plant biology.

Dr. Key and his staff are now negotiating with the awardees, trying to stretch that \$14.4 million to fund about 190 grants at 85 institutions.

The negotiations should be complete by September 1, and the award announcements should begin soon after.

The Joint Council for Food and Agricultural Sciences met July 13-14.

A key item on the agenda: DNA research safeguards.

The Council recommended to USDA that it ask the researchers it funds to follow NIH guidelines, published in the Federal Register of July 7, 1976.

The aim is to establish a uniform safeguards policy governing all scientists, regardless of funding source.

Other Council actions:

Establishment of three new committees...a permanent Executive Committee, a Priorities and Strategies Committee, and a Recombinant DNA Research Committee.

Approval of a Study Group recommendation to work up two to five alternate Joint Council organizational structures. These will be circulated for comment prior to adoption.

Receipt of several reports:

Dr. Betty Hawthorne, Dean of the School of Home Economics at Oregon State University, reviewed HERAPP--the "Home Economics Research Assessment, Planning, and Projections" report. HERAPP identifies 258 research problems and ranks the top 81 in priority order.

Dr. Charles Beer of SEA reviewed selected studies on food and agricultural science priorities. He reported they all have one thing in common...they treat all their recommendations as "necessary." However, few present priorities or indicate how to deal with reduced funding.

Dr. R. E. Buckman, Deputy Chief in the Forest Service, and Dr. D. P. Duncan, Dean of the School of Forestry, Fisheries, and Wildlife, at the University of Missouri, gave a status report on "Regional/ National Planning of Research for Forests and Associated Rangelands."

The first of five regional Small Farm Conferences was held in Montgomery, Alabama July 25-26. SEA's Dr. Neill Schaller, deputy director for Extension, took part. Other conferences will be held in Des Moines, Iowa, August 15-16; La Grande, Oregon, August 22-23; Albuquerque, New Mexico, September 6-7; and Poland Spring, Maine, September 27-28.

New 1890 college and Tuskegee Institute extension administrative heads visited Washington August 15-16, meeting with Secretary Bergland and other department officials.

Incidentally, important legislation for the colleges is being considered by Congress...an amendment to the 1977 Farm Bill that would

change their funding formula...otherwise some of the colleges would receive less money in 1979 than they did this year.

Dr. Homer C. Folks, SEA Assistant Director for Higher Education, reports that a national committee is at work developing higher education competitive grant guidelines.

Key personnel appointments:

Dr. James Nielson has been approved for the position of Deputy Director of SEA for Joint Planning and Evaluation. Jim needs no introduction to SEA employees or to our cooperators. He has been at the helm guiding the SEA reorganization since he was assigned by Secretary Bergland as Acting Director on November 1, 1977, and served until I came on board.

Mr. Arthur H. Nies, Deputy Director for Administrative Management, has also been approved and no longer has "Acting" before his title.

Dr. Thomas S. Ronningen is serving as acting Deputy Director of Cooperative Research until a permanent deputy director is named.

Dr. Charles W. McDougall has accepted the position of Assistant to the Deputy Director for Extension.

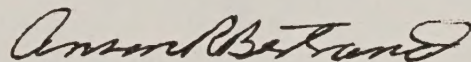
Mr. Gail F. Sedgwick has accepted the position of Assistant to the Deputy Director for Administrative Management.

Mr. Ralson R. Rhodes has been appointed Assistant to the Deputy Director for Federal Research.

Dr. Louis J. Brocato, who has been serving in an Acting capacity, is now permanent Chief, Communications and Data Services Division.

And Mr. Ovid Bay, former Director of Information for Extension, has been reassigned as Small Farm Program Coordinator for Extension.

Sincerely,



ANSON R. BERTRAND
Director
Science and Education

